



OBSIDIAN & ECHO WORKERS WALK OUT!

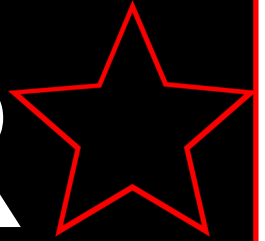


LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK



NO WAR ON IRAN - NO WAR ANYWHERE!

BLACK STAR



ORGANISE!-IWA WORKERS WALK OUT



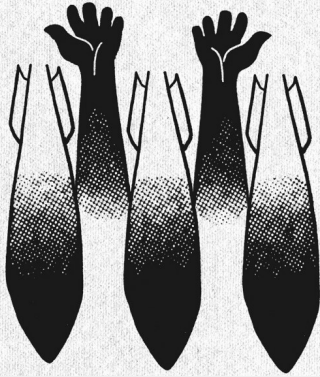
OF UNSAFE WORKPLACE AT OBSIDIAN & ECHO

On the eve of International Working Women's Day (Saturday 7th March) workers - all members of Organise! - IWA - employed at Obsidian and Echo Body Piercing Studios walked out of an unsafe work environment. Their boss and owner of the piercing studios Pamela Wilson had refused to move on Union recognition and demands from workers that included issues around unvaccinated workers being made to carry out fittings and piercings. Anyone exposed to bodily fluids and blood as part of their work **must** be vaccinated against Hepatitis B. Only one worker was provided with a full course of immunisations. When customers declared that they had HIV or Hepatitis B employees were put under pressure to do piercings and fittings regardless - "just double up your latex gloves" they were told. Pamela and her management have been given numerous opportunities to meet with their employees to resolve issues but instead they chose to ignore their workers and put them in danger despite claiming to be a "family" that values everyone equally (of course managers in both of Pamela's shops are immunised). Issues were first officially raised by the workers through their Union when a demand letter was handed to management on Saturday 31st January. Workers refuse to subject themselves to risk of disease for a minute longer.

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NO WAR IN IRAN! NO WAR ANYWHERE!

NO WAR



**IN IRAN!
IN GAZA!
IN LEBANON!
IN UKRAINE!
IN MYANMAR!
IN SOMALIA!
IN RUSSIA!
IN SOMALIA!
IN SUDAN!
IN RWANDA!
ANYWHERE!**

On the fourth day of bombing Iran Trump declared that the regime's air defences were "gone". Defenceless from further bombing attacks like those that murdered 185 seven to twelve year old girls at Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab on Saturday 28th February when the first bombs started falling. As Trump calls for "unconditional surrender" many on the left are in disarray, from claiming protests against the regime are CIA funded imperialist plots, that to 'properly' condemn the war on Iran we must support the regime! Monarchists demanding the return of the Shah have hijacked and attempted to hijack protests against the authoritarian regime. That regime, ruled by Ruhollah Khomeini from its inception in 1979 to his death in 1989 and subsequently ruled over by Ali Khamenei until his death in an airstrike on 1 March is authoritarian - women, workers and others have genuinely been struggling for

freedom from its despotism for many years.

The Iranian Labour Organisation described the death of Ali Khamenei in these words:

For millions in Iran, the death of a man who for decades symbolised massacre, suppression, poverty, militarism, and rule through blood has triggered a moment of release — a mix of long-contained rage and explosive relief. People's presence in the streets and the broader social reaction reveal the depth of hatred that years of crime and slaughter have accumulated inside society.

This is not joy in war. It is not joy in bombardment or in the killing of children. It is not joy in foreign intervention. It is the grim relief of seeing cracks appear in a monster that only two months ago, in Dey, drenched the country in blood — gunning down and crushing tens of thousands and turning society into an ocean of grief and anger. The people who are breathing today are the same people who yesterday were beaten, shot, and thrown into prisons.

American and Israeli aggression and military:

must be condemned unconditionally. No "rescue" narrative and no "defensive" framing can launder the killing of civilians.

They see the Islamic Republic as architects of their own fate, welcoming the rupture at the top but warning that this does not guarantee that the oppressed and exploited of Iran will succeed. Whatever deals are made, whatever government is put in place they warn will "hijack the revolution and take the direction of events out of the people's hands." The outcome will be, rather than the death of the Islamic Republic "the continuation of the same repressive order in a new form".

The ILO have called for more than opposition to war:

War is meant to frighten society and suspend the revolution; the people's answer must be to rebuild and organise their social power right in the middle of this crisis.

Workers, wage earners, youth, women, and all social forces must



understand one basic truth: no foreign power is going to deliver freedom."

Building a revolutionary movement "is not a "choice" today — it is an urgent necessity, both to protect human lives under wartime conditions and to take collective control of society's future."

The war on Iran will not bring them any aid, it rains down death on despot and oppressed alike - and upon the oppressed and exploited in much greater numbers. With Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, the ongoing war in Ukraine and wars and 'military operations' across the globe the clashing interests of global elites are dragging us closer and closer to all out war.

It is time that anti-war activists and anti-militarists ceased picking and choosing between different competing states, power blocks and imperialisms and began building coordinated anti-militarist activity that has the potential to free us from the destruction of global capitalism. That can provide the basis for revolutionary action, not only in Iran but across the globe, in Europe and in the USA itself.

While anarchists involved in *Irish Left With Ukraine* have supported the position of the ILO and agree with the position demanding an end to war and revolution in Iran the cognitive dissonance must be painful. In Ukraine they support one authoritarian regime against the other and support 'anarchists' joining the state military rather than building revolution. They tell us instead that "a shitty half democracy under a corrupt government is still better than Putins (sic) full on fascist dictatorship".

As anti-militarists we must clearly declare: 'No War on Iran - No War Anywhere!'

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY



TO THE BANK

Not noted for being as chummy as Paisley and McGuinness with their chuckle brothers act, Michelle O'Neill and Emma Little-Pengelly still have plenty to laugh about.

Despite repeatedly telling public sector workers that there was not the money to offer any pay rises above 3

or 4 per cent, Stormont politicians are in line for a 27% pay rise. In fairness, they have said that public anger about their pay rise would be 'understandable' and both People Before Profit's Gerry Carroll and Traditional Unionist Voice's Ticky Gaston have made common cause in opposing it, though it's unlikely that

either will actually return the money. As usual, the politicians are trying to hide behind the 'independence' of the Independent Financial Review Panel, set up (you guessed it) by Stormont.

Also joining the fray with the same level of irony as Carroll and Gaston, have been a couple of the union bosses, whose own pay is seldom, if ever, seen as an issue. One of these, Rita Devlin of the Royal College of Nursing, probably doesn't take home the £200,000 'earned' by the RCN's Chief Executive, but it can't be a kick in the arse off that. Formerly, of course, that was the job of Sinn Féin MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone, Pat Cullen, who took a pay cut to become a member of the Westminster flying column, though at least she doesn't need to do anything as someone who on principle doesn't take her seat, just the pay check (£93,904, if you're wondering). Not that the politicians up at Stormont will struggle even if by some strange turn of events, they don't get the big pay rise - around 15% of them are private landlords and many others have property, businesses and other income streams, it certainly pays to get elected.

Killed for Profit: Colin Thomas

A worker at Tobermore Concrete, Colin Thomas, was from the village between Magherafelt and Maghera in County Derry. He turned up for his work one day in 2023 as usual expecting a normal day. Poor health and safety procedures at the plant resulted in his death and the company have been fined £160,000 after a court case. Tobermore Concrete posted pre-tax profits just this month of £11.6 million giving their shareholders a rise from £95.2 to £104.2 million in the pot. The fine reflects the ridiculous and outrageous 'price' the courts and the state and system they serve place on the lives of workers. It highlights once again that profits are more important than workers' lives.

Colin Thomas was just one of the 140 or so workers killed at their jobs since 2014 in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of

Ireland, 58 workers were killed last year and 36 the year before that, a 61% increase spread across almost every single county. Many of these deaths are among farmers and agricultural workers, but many are also at industrial workplaces, like that of Colin Thomas's at Tobermore.

Most of these deaths, though crucially not all, are investigated by the health and safety executives in both jurisdictions. These follow the usual press release from businesses regretting the 'incidents' and stating how seriously this or that company takes safety at work issues. Typically, they then have to defend themselves against the HSE in court but the fines have long been a disgrace to the notion of holding homicidal capital to account. Apart from



this, there are the many workers injured and incapacitated whilst doing their job and it's estimated that about 300 workers die each year here in the North from exposure to hazardous substances earlier in their working lives.

When will this end? Only, we say, as a result of the class war, social revolution and the end of capitalism.



DEMANDS MOST REASONABLE

Employees at Echo and Obsidian Body Piercers in Belfast have unionised with Organise!-IWA in order to negotiate with their employer and improve their working conditions.

On 31st of January 2026 a demand letter was handed into management at Echo and Obsidian. Issues to be addressed include:

Unclear job roles/contracts - unfulfilled apprentice training and inconsistent application of disciplinary procedures.

Health and Safety - concerns around lone working must be addressed. Necessary courses of vaccinations for workers exposed to blood must be completed - most employees have received only two out of three vaccination doses for Hep B (which should be followed up with a booster in due course).

Breaks - employees regularly work over the duration of their 6 hour shifts without a break - in direct contravention of the *Working Time Regulations* (Northern Ireland) 2016, workers are legally entitled to an uninterrupted rest break of at least 20 minutes if their daily working time is more than six hours.

Payslips - payslips should be properly itemised so staff can clearly see what bonus payments relate to.

Rotas - A fair and transparent system of

scheduling staff is required.

Pay Rise - End of individually negotiated pay shop floor employees and apprentices to be paid the Real Living Wage of £13.45 per hour. Qualified Piercers to be paid £17.00 an hour.

Management have not responded to concerns around lone working - an individual employee was approached and offered £1.50 per hour extra to work on their own.

The employer has claimed that employees need to follow separate grievance procedures based on the shop they are employed by - it is clearly not the case that they work for two separate companies. This was acknowledged by the 'independent' HR company they have hired. These are employees of the same company working across two shops with interchangeable shifts.

In relation to incomplete vaccinations the employer has attempted to shift the onus for organising the remaining stages of their vaccinations onto their employees. Employers are legally required under COSHH Regulations to pay for and arrange Hepatitis B vaccinations for staff at risk of exposure. Shifting this onus onto employees is a breach of safety duties.

WORKERS AT RISK

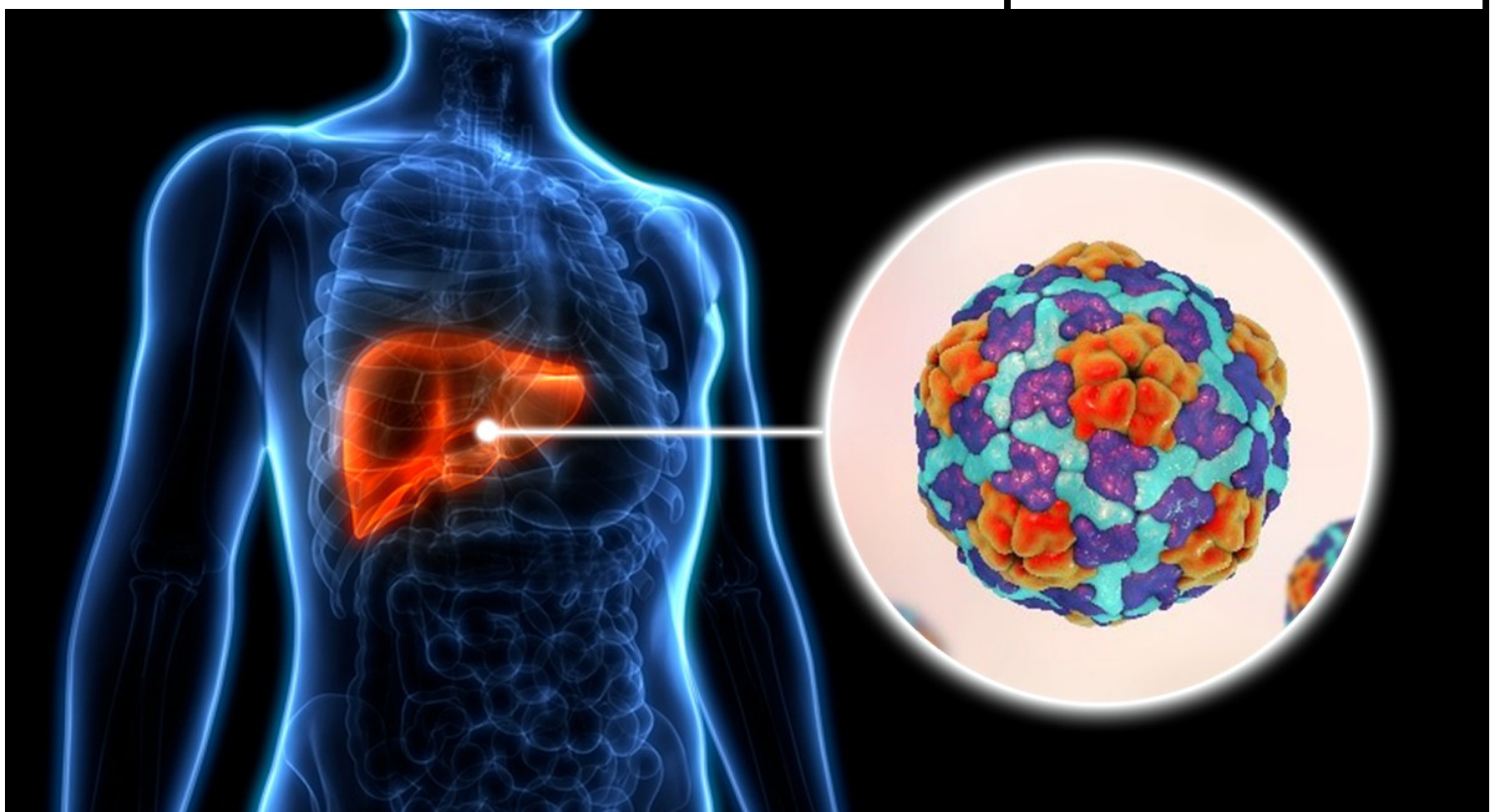
Immunisation against Hepatitis B is required for all workers who have increased exposure due to Occupational Risk. It is essential for employees of piercing studios who work with exposure to blood and bodily fluids i.e. piercers and jewellery fitters.

Immunisation protects against a virus that has severe consequences and which is a major global cause of death. It protects against acute infection (severe illness) and chronic infection (long-term liver inflammation), which can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Immunisation gives long-term protection that lasts decades - if the full course of injections is provided.

Hepatitis B has a **High Transmission Risk**: the virus spreads easily through contact with infected blood, semen, and vaginal fluids (e.g., needles, sex, birth). Babies born to infected mothers require immediate vaccination.

Chronic Hepatitis B significantly increases the risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer).

Asymptomatic Spread: Many people with chronic Hepatitis B are unaware they are infected but can still pass the virus to others.



BELFAST LOCAL ORGANISE! IWA TAKE ACTION!



All of the non-managerial staff at Obsidian and Echo Body Piercing in Belfast have been in dispute with their employer since the handing in of our demand letter on the 31st of January.

The workers had a clear list of concerns and demands to be addressed collectively and directly with them as members of Organise!-IWA.

Since then this company that pushes "one big happy family" as the propaganda has proven to be anything but. Issues developed out of the favoured 'negotiating' practice of the owner Pamela Wilson. She prefers a direct individual 'treat and threat' style of management. One worker being told they will get a bonus, or extra pay but that they were not to discuss this offer with others, this also went along with threatening employees - "if you don't comply you will lose your apprenticeship".

Initially Pamela tried to have issues 'dealt' with through a 'grievance procedure' involving an English HR company. Issues raised in relation to pay, conditions and immunisations were struck off the agenda. The grievance 'procedure' was rejected after an initial request from management that at least one member of staff attend (we demanded more workers be present) turned into zero employees, 2

'representatives' from Organise! IWA (one named and one there as his Union Rep!), no management from Obsidian or Echo and a 'neutral' facilitator from Peninsula Face2Face. Correspondence shared did not show any comprehension of NI specific labour legislation, was incorrectly dated and sent at short notice. Of course a major concern is the claimed 'independence' of a company in the pay of Echo and Obsidian's owner. Greater indications, more concerning to the workers that the owner was not acting in good faith also emerged. While Pamela and the HR company were communicating with Organise! IWA directly at this stage they were also still singling out employees and offering wee deals (that they were expected not to discuss with their co-workers). One worker was offered £15 an hour for short notice cover "for sickness and stuff" - clearly an attempt to set one of us up as a scab. That didn't work out for them and they started pulling workers in ones and twos to tell them there would be no recognition as Organise!-IWA are unregistered. In law every worker is entitled to join the union of their choosing - registered with the state or not.

Earlier a Federation of Small Businesses

poster was put up in a rather laughable attempt to intimidate employees.

Reiterating the option of negotiations throughout workers had no alternative left to them but to escalate their dispute. On Saturday 21st February an appointments blockade was put in place for the day, on Tuesday 24th February an Email Zap took place and management set email to 'out of office' around lunchtime meaning that any emails from customers weren't dealt with. On Thursday a Phone Zap happened with supporters showing solidarity and demanding that management negotiate with their employees and stop attempts at union busting.

On Saturday 28th of February an info picket took place outside Obsidian. Management put a sign in the window claiming business was operating as usual, that they had not received any "formal staff grievances" and ended with the brass necked claim that "We remain committed to a respectful workplace and open communication".

Despite the deflection, attempts at setting workers against each other and then the outright refusal to negotiate we contacted management at Obsidian and Echo again on the morning of the 5th of March to reiterate that their employees were committed to finding a negotiated way forward and to the resolution of their dispute.

No movement has been made on the demands presented 5 weeks ago and the actions of the employer have been to isolate and undermine their employees. On the afternoon of the 5th the answer to our latest offer to negotiate got a response of sorts. A job for a piercer was advertised on Echo Body Piercing's social media at "Up to £20 an hour"! This is substantially more than the pay increase demanded by Pamela's current employees who she clearly under pays, under values and puts at risk.

GUINNESS ZERO WORKERS' WIN



It took a strike at Christmas to do it, but the Guinness Zero workers at Diageo Belfast have secured a wage increase. The plant ground a standstill over the festive period as the workers demanded pay parity with their Diageo workmates in Runcorn earning a higher wage for the same job in the canning factory.

The workers secured 15.5% over three years after a strike lasting eight days but it will be interesting to see if other workers across the drinks industry here will see things change for them.

The Northern Ireland government is considering minimum unit pricing for alcohol, a move roundly opposed when it was brought in over in Scotland by both brewery and distillery workers. It led to layoffs and pay cuts across the sector whose full effects still haven't been completely realised. The bods at Stormont are citing 'expert evidence' as if it were sacred scripture, in support of their claims that it will reduce deaths from alcohol and alcohol-related illness. However, alcohol-consumption trends even here have been on the decline year on year, whilst the rise in nonalcoholic drinks, as the Zero Guinness workers will testify, has been on the increase. This, as in Scotland, is a gimmick intended to show politicians can do stuff, especially if it raises money for the state and costs them fuck all.

NHS WORKERS UNDER ATTACK



UNISON has revealed almost 2,000 workers have been sacked by the six health trusts here over the last five years for non-attendance or absenteeism. This is in spite of promises by the trusts that they had introduced a so-called 'just culture' model into their disciplinary procedures, which would, they claimed result in fairer outcomes for workers.

In 2024-25, another 450 staff were sacked and this in a time when stress levels at work have been steadily on the rise, the health service has been crumbling and starved of resources, and thousands of workers have been physically and verbally assaulted at their work. Would you want to go to work in an atmosphere like that?



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Just Books Publishing, set up by the Just Books Collective, has so far published its first two titles.



Gregori Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, to mark the 100th year of existence of the International Workers Association (IWA) the Anarcho-Syndicalist international founded in Berlin in 1922.

isbn 9781739723705

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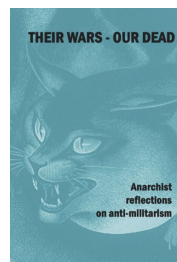
Nick Heath's *The Idea. Anarchist Communism: Past, Present and Future* - a welcome and new comprehensive work on anarchist communism, this book seeks to rehabilitate the

current of anarchist-communism. To make it better known and understood.

...a good substantial book, and much needed. Lucidly written, it provides a rich brew of engaging discussions of the 'Idea' (anarchist communism as a political philosophy), interesting vignettes of many individual anarchists, and a great historical account of the many anarchist communist organisations over the past 150 years... (Brian Morris on *The Idea*)

isbn 9781739723712

£15.00



Also available from Just Books is Active Distro's *Their Wars - Our Dead*. Since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, war fever has swept the anarchist movement and a larger section of 'the left'.

The essays collected in this

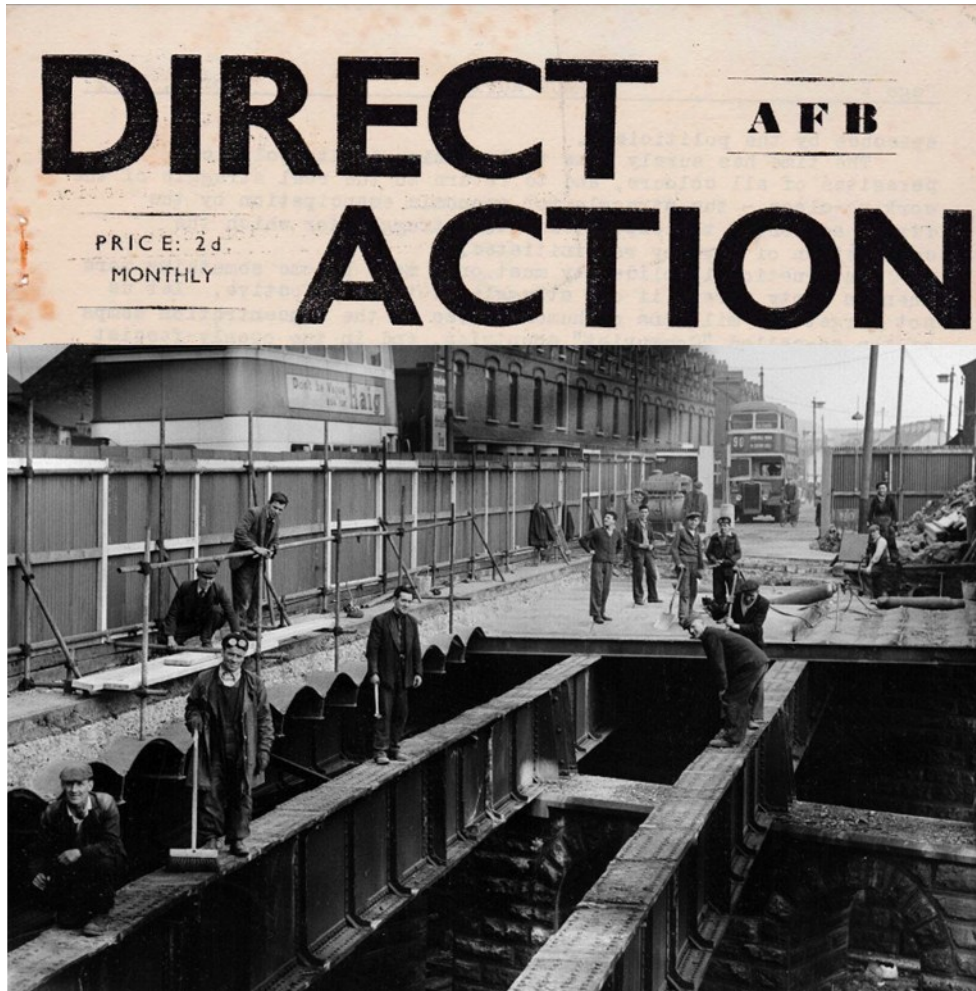
book seek to put forward a revolutionary course for anarchist anti-militarism today.

Some of what is covered includes: internationalist opposition to WW1 and WW2; conscription in Ukraine, Russia and Israel; anti-militarism and the war in Ukraine; the relationship between anarchism and militarism in Ireland.

All of these titles are available to order from **Just Books Collective, 6 Wellington Court, Belfast, BT1 6HW.**

Email: justbooksbelfast@gmail.com

Back in the day: Belfast Anarchism 1949



After the cataclysmic years of the Second World War, Belfast was trying to re-build, and though there was little hope for the working class, who'd suffered the bulk of the trauma, small seeds of struggle began to renew...

At the end of the War a small group had come together, though with no premises of their own. A County Armagh native, Gerry Williamson, was living in north Belfast and held meetings in his home instead:

'We hold a small meeting of four or five Anarchist friends every Wednesday night in our small sitting room' but needed 'a small hall seating forty to sixty persons, where discussions and general working class lectures would be given. Outdoor meetings are no good for this class of work, especially with the Police as listeners.'

The unnamed group, however, did hold

outdoor meetings in the Custom House Square and as Williamson notes 'these have quite a good following' and could have been the basis for the formation of a further two groups.

In a report in the paper of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation, the British section of the International Workers' Association (a forerunner of today's Solidarity Federation), in 1949, Gerry Williamson outlined conditions in Ireland north and south:

'The recent election was not brought about by the wishes of the residents of the north, but was a natural outcome of the Dublin Government's desire to sever, once and for all, their very slim link with the English crown, and so fulfil the Southern politicians' age-long wish to have no connection with the English Government.

As far as the workers of Northern Ireland are concerned, this election was merely a fight between two sets of exploiters as to who would rule and exploit them. There was, however, this material difference to the Northern wage-slaves: the northern workers at present get the same Social Benefits as to unemployment and sickness as the English workers, but under the Dublin regime the rate of social benefits are on a lower scale. Then there is a strict censorship on all newsprint and general literature entering that part of the country - there are several English Sunday newspapers that are not allowed entry to the South at all.

With regard to the above mention of different rates of social benefits: it has been stated to the writer by those who are for an Irish Republic that, if this regime were to materialise and take over the industrialised north, then the social rates now in operation in the South would be raised to the English level... in other words, the industrialised north would raise the living standards of all-Ireland! What a farce when we remember that the industries in the North are not capable of absorbing the unemployed in this area due to the falling-off of overseas orders and a home market that we know to be over-stocked.

If the Irish workers throughout this island would but forget their religious and political differences of opinion, and unite in a general fight against their common enemy, the capitalist system, for a better living standard and full employment for all, then we should see the politicians, North and South, forgetting all about elections and coming to grips with the workers in a fight to retain their ill-gotten gains'.



Get Involved: Help Build A Working Class Alternative.



Organise! is an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ireland which is affiliated to the International Worker's Association as 'friends of' section. We take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, and particularly the history and tradition of struggle epitomised by the IWA - the anarcho-syndicalist international. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985. We are a growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, direct democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier...

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the

richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cavan, Derry, Dublin, Lisburn, Monaghan, Newry, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. Contact your nearest Local or Local in formation to get involved.

Belfast Local: organiseiwabelfastlocal@gmail.com

South Ulster Local: suanorganiseiwa@mf.me

Dublin Local in formation: organiseasidublin@gmail.com

We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid. Every member is an active member.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at <https://organiseanarchistsireland.com> and send an email to: organiseasi@gmail.com

